

**Letter from the NBRU of the Philippines**

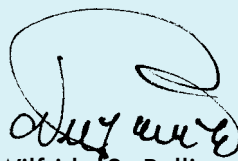
Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to introduce this issue, which addresses one of the key topics of conservation: people's participation. What makes this issue particularly interesting is its focus on visualizing people's knowledge via different means ranging from community mapping to modern Geographic Information Technologies to foster dialogue among multiple stakeholders.

The Philippines has been at the forefront in terms of incorporating people's participation in protected area management. As early as 1992, Congress passed R.A. No. 7586 better known as the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act, calling for the active participation of local communities in protected area management. Among the salient provisions of the NIPAS Act is the creation of the Protected Area Management Board for each protected area. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) followed in

1997, addressing the rights of indigenous peoples on ancestral lands and waters and providing the basis for incorporating traditional knowledge in sustainable natural resources management.

As the Director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, I welcome initiatives like the "ASEAN Biodiversity" because the basis of change is learning and learning occurs mainly by sharing lessons learned and additional valuable information.



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# Contents

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**About You And Us**

Readers' Corner	2
Letter from the NBRU of the Philippines	3
First Quarter in a Nutshell	4
<i>Editorial</i>	
GIS and the Fingertips	10

**Special Reports**

Relief Models, a Multipurpose Tool for Improved Natural Resource Management <i>The Experience of the Upper Nan Watrshed Management Project in Thailand</i>	11
Bringing the Vertical Dimension to the Negotiating Table <i>Preliminary Assessment of a Conflict Resolution Case in the Philippines</i>	17



<i>MIGIS</i> Using GIS to Produce Community-Based Maps to Promote Collaborative Natural Resource Management	27
"Participation" in a conflicting policy framework <i>Lesson learned from a Thai experience</i>	35
The Seventh Helper: the Vertical Dimension <i>Feedback from a training exercise in Vietnam</i>	43
A Profile of the Protected Area System Lao PDR	46

**Bookmarks**

Fourth ARCBC-NBRU Consultative Meeting	53
ADB Forest Policy Reviewed	55
Twinning Ideas with Sri Lanka for Conservation Management	56

NBRU Philippines and ERDB take the lead <i>Formulating the National R&amp;D Agenda on Biodiversity Conservation</i>	57
Water, Life and Culture: celebrating Wetlands Day 2002	59

**Profiles**



Kerinci-Seblat National Park - Indonesia	60
Gunung Mulu National Park - Malaysia	70

**Database**

Information Management and Networking in Thailand	76
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**Publications**

<i>Training Resources Database Entries</i> Capsule Reviews	79
---------------------------------------------------------------	----